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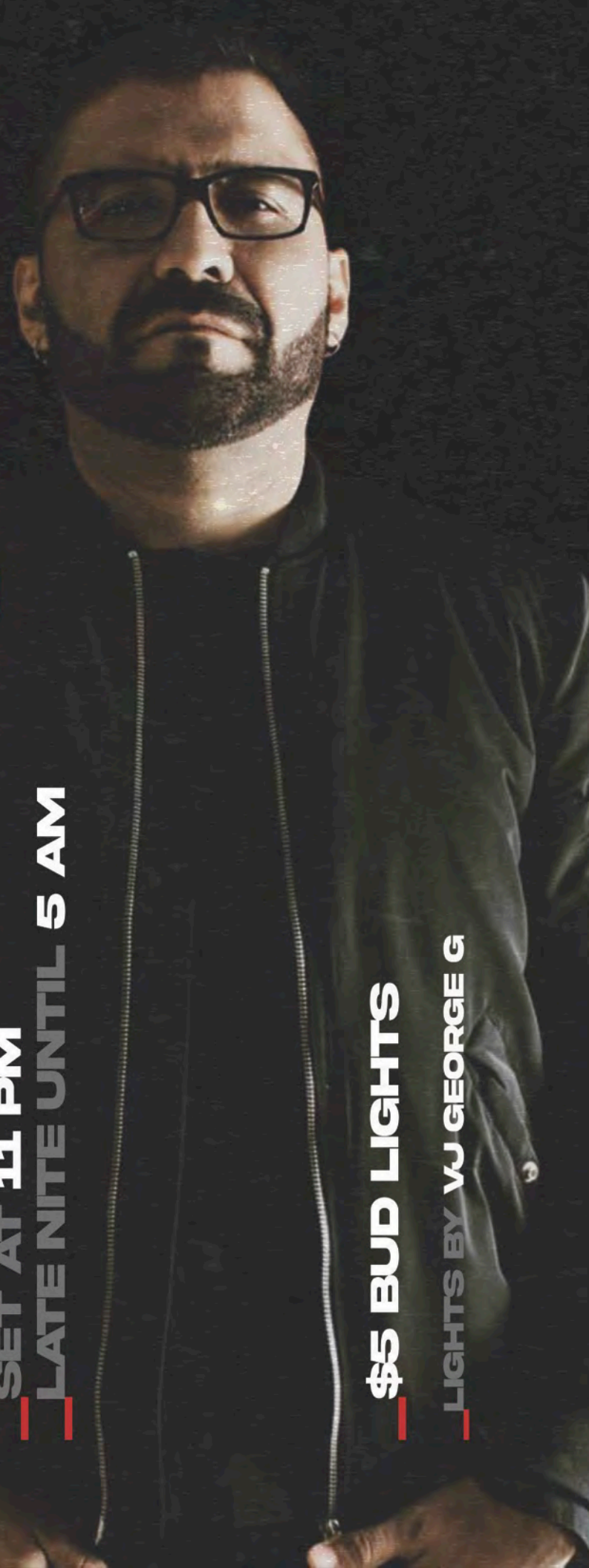

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GRAB DONNIE

Welcome back to The Colored Section: An interview with Donnie

By Gregg Shapiro

Photo By Andrew Dosunmu

Let's spill the tea here and now. What was passing for Motown Records during the late 1990s and early 2000s was a poor excuse for what was once a groundbreaking and important home for music. There were a few exceptions (see Erykah Badu), but the suits and corporate conmen running the show mistreated several artists, including gay retro-soul artist Donnie. In spite of across-the-board favorable reviews, Donnie's exceptional debut album *The Colored Section* was virtually ignored. As if to set the record straight (so to speak), Motown is reissuing *The Colored Section* in an expanded 20th-anniversary edition. Donnie was gracious enough to answer a few questions in advance of the reissue's release.

Gregg Shapiro: Your acclaimed debut album The Colored Section is being reissued in an expanded 20th-anniversary edition. What does such an auspicious occasion mean to you as an artist?
Donnie: As an artist, it means forgiveness first of all. I didn't do well in the music industry; very embarrassing moment. It means forgiveness, but it also means that somebody actually looks at my art as respectable. It's just something to be celebrated from the same label that dropped you *[laughs]*.

GS: They realized their mistake.
D: I was really surprised. But everybody's not the same within the company.

GS: There have been some personnel changes.
D: Yes.

GS: For the better, I hope.
D: Oh, yes! They're saying things like, "If you need anything, just call me." I'm like, "OK." But I'm pushing 50, so it just isn't the same. Nobody's the same.

GS: The Colored Section was released during June, which is both Pride Month and African American Music Appreciation Month. Please say something about the significance of that to you.
D: Being gay and coming from a Hebrew Pentecostal church, it was even more difficult than being from your average Pentecostal church, because it was very much Leviticus (based). So, what it means to me is just a balance. Having both feet out of the closet. I had to stand up for gay people, but I was still uncomfortable because I wanted my mother to love me. It's very significant, because she'll be listening. She's gotten over a lot of it, stil, She might as well, I'm not gonna stop. Plus Juneteenth! It's me [laughs], the month! The music, Juneteenth which is very Colored Section/black history, and gay rights month.

GS: Everything at once! How involved were you in the process of selecting the bonus material that is included in the reissue?
D: I was not involved. They own the masters to the track. They don't own the songs, but they own the masters, so they did what they did. It's a business.

GS: What do you think about the bonus material that was chosen?

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D: I really don't like "Trois." It was a recording I made for a movie for a soundtrack, but they put it on there anyway. There are songs that people have heard, a love song called "When You Call My Name" and people really love that. I thank God.

GS: Among the bonus tracks, there are numerous dance remixes. Did you have the experience of being in a club and hearing the DJ spinning one of your songs?
D: I don't think so, and if I did I can't remember it. I never remember anybody playing my music in a club.

GS: Maybe now they will get played with this reissue.
D: I think they were, but I was never there, I guess.

GS: Georgia, and Atlanta in particular, has been in the news quite a bit. On the one hand there is a progressive politician such as Stacey Abrams representing the region, and on the other hand there is also racist homophobe Marjorie Taylor Green. As someone with deep roots in Georgia, can you please say something about that?
D: She's (Greene) a put-on! There are certain things that Marjorie does so she can get publicity. A lot of people do that. I don't think she's real, but I think she doesn't care whether she's real. She doesn't care either way. She looks very lame. Now, Stacey Abrams, I am down for her! As a matter of fact, she came on the TV and I was like, "Stacey! I went to high school with her!"

GS: You went to high school with Stacey?
D: Yes [laughs]! She's not being fake. She's being her! It's been a while. A lot of people don't know that because I don't say it. We went to Avondale High School together.

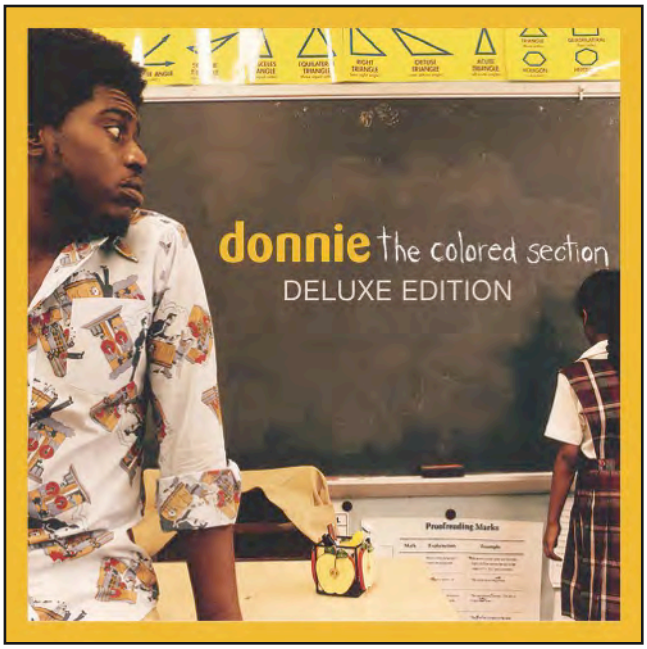
GS: I appreciate you sharing that with me. You have cited the influence of Stevie Wonder, Donny Hathaway and Marvin Gaye on your work, all of whom come through loud and clear in your powerful lyrics and your vocal style. Do you know if Stevie Wonder ever heard The Colored Section, and if so, what did he think of it?
D: I never heard what Stevie thought of it. I think he's heard it. This guy from Hidden Beach (Records), I forgot his name, handed me a phone one time and Stevie Wonder was on the phone. I said, "I hope this isn't a person imitating him [laughs]!" I was young; it's very much a copy album, to me. I really hoped that he was honored, but I don't think he was impressed. I'm just saying what I feel.

GS: In addition to Stevie, Donny and Marvin, black gay male performers such as Sylvester, Luther Vandross, Labi Siffre, Blackberri, Johnny Mathis, and even Little Richard, preceded you. What influence, if any, did they have on you?
D: I would say all of them. You said Johnny Mathis, but you didn't say Liberace!

GS: Because he wasn't black!
D: [Laughs] I love American music. Sylvester comes from the Pentecostal

church. Which a lot of gay men do. There's a lot of gay men in the choir! I loved Sylvester's music before I ever heard about the common ground with Pentecostalism. The church was fighting against me, but I'm sorry, here's this man dressed like a woman with this high voice singing this pumping song, "You make me feel might real!" It was inspiration! Even Johnny Mathis. He sang the theme song for Family Ties. Him and, woo, Deniece Williams! Oh, my gosh! Anybody who came out and was openly gay or were found out… because it's not the easiest thing. I'm not hard on people about it. But it was very inspirational for people to have the balls to do that because they're black. Being black and being gay, you are persecuted by own race and by others.

GS: The Colored Section was released before we had queer black music icons including Janelle Monae, Billy Porter, Frank Ocean, Todrick Hall, and Lil Nas X, to name a few. How do you feel about the evolution of queer black performers?
D: Like I said, it's bold. But I think it's needed. A lot of people give opinions on what it is to be gay and don't even know any gay people. What they're really seeing is what has already been, what was in the clubs. Now they're getting the chance to experience it. It's not the easiest thing, but because it's art people don't get such a hard time. Even though they gave Tevin Campbell a hard time, I heard. I wish he could have made it. He had talent. But he was gay, and he was feminine. They wanted someone for the girls can go crazy over. I feel that they're needed, and folks are going to have to get used to stuff. They're not the only ones here!



GS: In the interim, between your second album The Daily News and now, have you been working on any new music?
D: I've been working on a musical. It's called The American Mythology. I've been working on The American Mythology for, I would, guess 15 years. I didn't stop because it was my heart, it's what kept me alive. It's a musical. It's not about Donnie. I want this to go to Broadway, but I want to put it on stage first. It's not easy, but I do have a connection. I'm going to do it. Maybe I'll do a single, every now and then. But a Donnie album? I don't know. [Laughs] you never know.

GRAB A FILM

How ‘Fear Street’ Became Queer Street

The director, openly gay writer, and non-binary star on the popular book series' queer evolution

By Chris Azzopardi

Phil Graziadei, the openly gay screenwriter behind Netflix’s new queer-inclusive film trilogy based on spook master R.L. Stine’s classic “Fear Street” series, remembers those teen horror-fiction books well. And he definitely remembers them not being very gay.

Published first in 1989 with “The New Girl,” the “Fear Street” series focused on whodunit and paranormal events in the town of Shadyside, Ohio. The books weren’t short on sinister camp, but they definitely lacked any kind of blatantly queer representation.

That hasn’t stopped fans, as Graziadei notes, from cataloging “all the homoerotic undertones of each book” for years. In the ’90s, when Stine published bestselling “Fear Street” titles like “Truth or Dare” and “The Boy Next Door,” the LGBTQ+ community was more willing to accept queer crumbs.

But now it’s 2021. On “Fear Street,” bodies might be buried, but queerness shouldn’t be.

“One of the first conversations that I had with the producers about it was, ‘Why do we do this now?’” director Leigh Janiak says.

The answer came to them quickly: Shadyside, they decided, would be a town of outsiders, with a queer love story at the center. That queer couple would not only be the stars of the show — they’d be the heroes. They’d even have a better shot at surviving the terrifying events that unfold throughout each of the trilogy’s parts, which take

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place in 1994, 1978 and 1666.

"It was very clear to us very early on that we wanted to write this about queer leads," says Graziadei. "Obviously, queer representation in horror movies has a long and complicated history, for the most part.

We're only seeing ourselves on screen as monsters or as victims. You know, maybe I don't always want to be the monster. I don't think that there's a reason why the queer people always have to see themselves that way."

The anthology kicks off with "Fear Street Part 1: 1994," where we meet Deena Johnson (Kiana Madeira) and Sam Fraser (Olivia Scott Welch) as they're experiencing a rift in their relationship. Sam is closeted and just moved to Sunnyvale with her mom — the town adjacent to Shadyside, where Deena lives, but nothing at all like the infamous setting for "Fear Street." Sunnyvale is rich and white. No one gets murdered there. When pure evil is unleashed in Shadyside in the form of a witch who's haunted the town for eons, Deena, Sam and their cadre of friends go on a deathly voyage through time to solve a nightmare that has haunted the town for 300 years.

Welch says the queer love story is "very indicative of modern-day cinema and how it's evolving, and how art is reflecting the elements of society that are becoming very inclusive and encouraging people to be themselves." It was the "not so boxed in" quality of her and Madeira's romantically involved characters that particularly appealed to her about "Fear Street," because, as she and Janiak note, the horror genre still has work to do when it comes to queer representation.

"I hope this is just the beginning of a brand new era in terms of seeing minorities represented in these kinds of roles," Madeira says.

Janiak and Graziadei, the director-writer team behind 2014's indie creeper "Honeymoon," were intentional about having "Fear Street" move the needle forward for LGBTQ+ representation in horror films. Within the heteronormative confines of the horror genre, seeing actual queer people who aren't victims or villains has been a slow go, and Janiak says that even some of the most enduring horror films haven't always best represented the LGBTQ+ community.

Janiak, who has directed two episodes of the "Scream" TV series, points to Wes Craven's iconic "Scream" film, noting that, while an "amazing" horror movie, only white cisgender straight people led the cast. While Graziadei acknowledges some queer coding in "Scream," Janiak said she thinks that queerness in contemporary horror should go beyond subtext. "Coding is different than being (fully) recognized," she says.

That "Fear Street" goes beyond just gay vibes was one of the most exciting parts of starring in the summer camp-set "Part Two: 1978" for non-binary actor Ryan Simpkins, who uses they/them pronouns. Even though the script didn't identify Simpkins' Alice character as gay, they believed from the onset that she was. "She's so heavily queer coded," Simpkins says, "and working through this character, I just kept coming back to that. And honestly trying to fight that impulse to be like, 'I think Alice has maybe been in love with

Photo Courtesy of Netflix

her best friend Cindy.' I kept trying to push that feeling away until I finally embraced it."

While playing the role, the actor said they didn't want Janiak or Emily Rudd, who plays Cindy, to invalidate her queer read on Alice. But after shooting, they did ask them how Alice identifies and whether Alice did indeed have a thing for Cindy. They were not wrong: "(Leigh and Emily) were like, 'One-hundred percent, Alice and Cindy are gay.'"

Alice's queerness aside, Simpkins says of Deena and Sam's enduring queer love, "It's so exciting to see a love story between two teenage girls being the main force behind a trilogy of studio movies. Like, that's crazy, and it isn't subtle. It's very explicit. There's an almost-sex scene!"

"It's so rare to get these characters whose sexuality is not demonized and isn't why they're being punished," Simpkins adds. "It's their love for each other that makes them succeed."

A love that even R.L. Stine was seemingly rooting for. Throughout the trilogy's development, Janiak had conversations with the author, who she said was "very supportive." Graziadei also felt that support: "He's very clearly been like, '"Fear Street" is for everybody.'"

Chris Azzopardi is the Editorial Director of Pride Source Media Group and Q Syndicate, the national LGBTQ+ wire service. He has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.

GRAB LAUREN

"Leaving" an impression: An interview lesbian writer Lauren Hough

By Gregg Shapiro

Memoirs are a tricky form of writing. Remember James Frey and *A Million Little Pieces?* Nevertheless, memoirs are also an endless source of fascination for readers and Leaving Isn't the Hardest Thing (Vintage, 2021) by Lauren Hough is definitely fascinating. Raised in the notorious Children of God cult, Hough's rough and tumble life during that time period as well as in the years that followed is nothing less than astonishing. From her time in the armed forces to her stints as a bouncer at the beloved DC gay disco Badlands and working as a cable installer, as well as jail time served, readers will marvel at her ability to write about her experiences in such a clear and inviting manner. Hough was kind enough to answer a few questions in advance of the publication of her book.

Gregg Shapiro: Were the essays in *Leaving Isn't the Hardest Thing* written in the order in which they appear in the book?
Lauren Hough: No. But I couldn't tell you the order. Some of the essays began as one and a digression turned into a separate essay, or the digression was the essay and I had to go back and delete 90 percent of the first draft, or keep one sentence that turned into another essay. It's as fun as it sounds[laughs]. The Badlands essay about working at a club was my white whale for several months. I just couldn't find a way in. The great thing about Twitter is I've made friends with writers who are incredibly generous. I could send an essay that might as well have been a few post-it notes to people like Sandra Newman and Heather Havrilesky who could tell me I'd made it too complicated, again. And the jail essay – I simply didn't want to write it. I didn't want to have to think on it long enough to write it. As it was, I kept having to get up and stand outside, just to remind myself I could.

GS: When did you realize you had a book?
LH: I think I always knew I had a book. I

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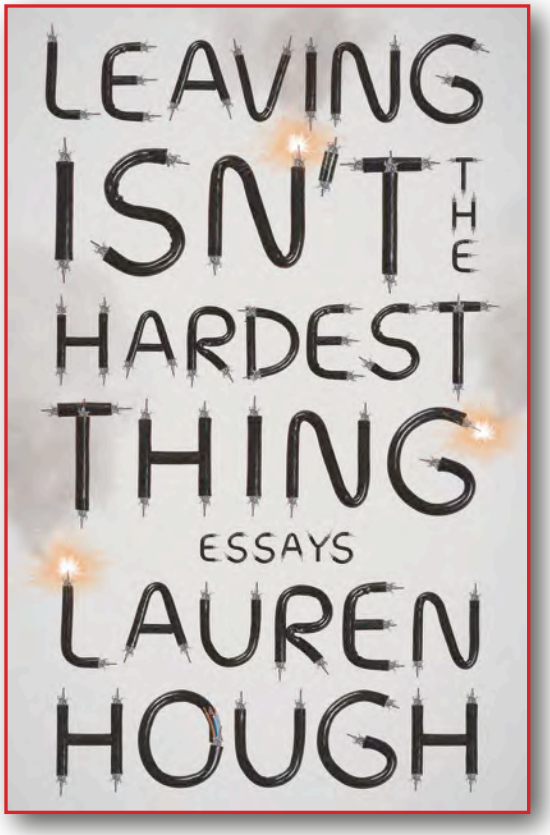
spent a long time not writing it, writing anything else. I tried songwriting. I thought maybe instead of writing a book, I'd be the lesbian Townes Van Zandt. But I'm lousy at guitar and Mary Gauthier already has that covered. I wrote half of a few novels that sound exactly like someone else. It wasn't until I started writing about my life that I started sounding like me.

GS: The "leaving" theme, including the Children of God cult, the military, and your girlfriends Rhonda and Autumn, is one of the threads that stitches the essays together. Do you think this personal history would have been different if you hadn't spent your formative years in Children of God?
LH: They do call them formative years [laughs]. But it's impossible to say who or what or where I'd be, who I'd be with, what my life would look like if I'd grown up any different. It's one of those thoughts that'll keep you up at night, make you reach for your drug of choice, or write a book trying to unravel and understand it all. I think it's safe to say I might have had healthier relationships earlier had I not been raised in a cult.



GS: You mention murdered gay soldier Barry Winchell a couple of times, and refer to other victims of homophobic violence, including Matthew Shepard, Brandon Teena and Arthur Warren. Would if be fair to say that your experiences in both Children of God and the military also made you hyper-aware of the potential for harm to LGBTQ people?
LH: I think most queer people are hyper-aware of the threats out there. Some are definitely more sheltered. That used to anger me. It's one of the less attractive human traits, the need to be pissed at those who have it better. Runs right alongside being pissed at those who have it worse, who might be allowed a little sympathy. But it's beautiful, that we live in a world where not every queer kid is raised to be ashamed, not tortured. Unfortunately, it's still a world wherein we do have to be aware of the threats. I think it's important we do remember the price some paid, that we recognize how easily the freedoms we do enjoy can be taken, that if we do have a voice, we use it to fight for and protect those who don't.

GS: You write a lot about the music you were listening to, including Indigo Girls, Sarah McLachlan, Melissa Etheridge, Emmylou Harris and Ani DiFranco, among others. Does Sarah McLachlan know about how much you wrote about her?
LH: God. Let's hope she's too busy being Sarah McLachlan to read my book [laughs].

GS: You currently live in Austin, home to SXSW and ACL and I was wondering if you've been able to take advantage of the amazing music scene that Austin has to offer?
LH: You know the shame of it is, when I first moved to Austin, I was working five nights a week at a bar. So, the only acts I saw were those that played our bar during SXSW. Then I was supposed to be writing a book, so I only saw a few shows. The last show I saw before COVID was Carolyn Wonderland at the Continental Club. I ended up doing coke in the alley with a 6'8" Icelandic dude named Thor. One of those decisions you know you'll regret, but how often does an honest to god viking named Thor offer you coke? About as often as a pandemic keeps you in your house for the next year.

GS: Leaving Isn't the Hardest Thing is coming out at a time when the country is still reeling from having Trump, the closest thing to a cult leader we've experienced, as President. Do you see parallels between your experience in a cult

and Trump's religious zealot followers, something touched on in the final essay "Everything That's Beautiful Breaks My Heart"?
LH: I've probably given five different answers on this. The similarities are there, especially when we're talking about why so many people became enamored with him, or, for that matter, Bernie or anyone who inspires that level of zealotry. Americans really fucking love a cult. We love conspiracy theories. We like easy answers like they're all stupid, they're poor, they're racist. I don't think it's that simple. These movements offer all the benefits of a cult – the community, the secret map to happiness and success, someone to blame for their problems. But I don't know that we have the vocabulary for what this is, which is a problem.

GS: On a recent episode of Finding Your Roots, Glenn Close talked about her family's involvement in the Moral Re-Armament religious cult. Have you ever encountered Close, or Rose McGowan or Joaquin Phoenix (also raised in Children of God), and shared stories of your experiences?
LH: No, but if you run into Glenn Close, can you give her my number [laughs]? I'd love to talk about anything else with her.

GS: If there was a movie version of Leaving Isn't the Hardest Thing, who would you want to play you?
LH: I don't know. I've had some shockingly bad hair phases. I'd hate for anyone to have to spend a year growing out a yellow mohawk.

GS: Have you started writing or thinking about your next book?
LH: I have an idea for it. I've started writing sentences. I've even written a paragraph or two. But if I've learned anything it's that what I think will be the next book will in no way resemble the book I write.

GRAB A GETAWAY

Pride Journey: St. Louis, Missouri

By Joey Amato

On this visit to St. Louis, I wanted to focus on Union Station, a magnificent property located in heart of the city which features an aquarium, numerous dining options, a Ferris wheel and of course the Union Station Hotel. St. Louis is a quick 3.5-hour drive from my home in Indianapolis, so it's a great place for a long weekend getaway.

The first thing you notice when you walk into the Grand Hall at Union Station Hotel is the soaring ceiling, elegantly detailed with carvings and architectural elements that make the property a destination in itself. Every evening, there is a light show projected on the ceiling which draws hotel guests and tourists alike. The 567-room hotel - a Curio Collection by Hilton property, and the entire complex, which was originally built in 1894, is considered a National Historic Landmark.

Our first stop on our visit was the aquarium. While not the largest I've been to, the aquarium does entice the senses, urging guests to get their hands wet, especially when it comes to petting the stingrays. The tank consists of over 60 sharks and rays all begging for attention. There are some great Instagram-friendly areas in the aquarium as well, so get your camera ready.

For those looking to experience a bit of adventure, try the Sky Trail ropes course. I am not a fan of heights, so this was pushing my boundaries as some of the obstacles only contain foot pads, without anything to hold on to. I may have skipped over one of these early on until I built up enough courage to proceed through the course like a pro. The Sky Trail course includes about a dozen obstacles and two zip lines, one 60-feet over the aquarium lobby floor. They have a smaller version available for children, or the occasional skittish LGBTQ journalist, who may not be ready for the larger course.

Head over to The Train Shed for dinner before a night in The Grove, the city's entertainment district. My guest and I didn't want anything too heavy, so we decided to share a few appetizers including the Deviled Eggs and a fabulous Charcuterie Plate prepared with a selection of artisan cured meats and cheeses. I also ordered the Arugula & Beet Salad served with candied pecan, Feta, and lemon truffle vinaigrette.

The Grove is under 10 minutes away from the hotel. While many LGBTQ venues have closed in recent years, the city still boasts Rehab and Just John. I remember partying at Just John during my first visit to St. Louis many years ago. I had a wonderful evening back then, and this visit certainly didn't disappoint. We began the evening at Taha'a Twisted Tiki, a gay-friendly tiki bar, and both ordered the "I Don't Give a Damn," a refreshing cocktail made with vodka, lemon, pineapple, passion fruit and ginger.

All of the bars in The Grove are within walking distance, so head over to Rehab next. I'll admit, one of the bartenders made me want to move to the city immediately. He was extremely friendly (and attractive) and poured us some delicious cocktails which we enjoyed on the patio. We then headed to *Just John* where we spent the

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majority of the evening dancing and mingling amongst the locals, who I found to be very friendly.

Pride St. Louis recently announced their *"Pride Is Alive"* celebration, scheduled for August 27-29 at BallPark Village. The outdoor event is free to the public, so if you are looking for a summer pride event, this is definitely one you should check out.

Speaking of BallPark Village, I have never been to that part of town and was eager to explore. I was so impressed by the masterplan design of the neighborhood as well as the venues and properties occupying the space, most notably, Bally Sports Live! The massive entertainment complex contains numerous bars and restaurants including PBR St. Louis, a country bar complete with a mechanical bull which my guest made me ride. It was my first time riding and despite being whipped around like a rag doll, I think I did pretty well.

End your stay in St. Louis with a trip to the world famous St. Louis Zoo. The free attraction is perfect for those looking to spend a leisurely afternoon strolling through an urban oasis filled with lively giraffes, elephants, and gorillas. The zoo is home to over 12,000 animals representing 500 species.

The Saint Louis Zoo also operates a WildCare Institute, which focuses on wildlife management and recovery as well as conservation. The zoo has pledged to support critical initiatives in places where animals are threatened by shrinking habitats, poaching and disease. You will need to devote a few hours to this visit as the zoo is quite expansive.

There are too many things to see and do in St. Louis in just one weekend, so if you have more time to devote, check out The Gateway Arch, St. Louis Museum of Art, the Missouri Botanical Garden and City Museum. These are just a few of many LGBTQ-friendly attractions worth visiting in the city.

To book your St. Louis gaycation, visit ***www.Orbitz.com/pride.***

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GRAB BOBBY

Bobby Newberry's High Octane "Ride"

The Choreographer-Turned-Singer Bumps, Twirls, and Grinds in First Single from His Upcoming EP

By Shane Gallagher

Bobby Newberry has always had a passion for performing. As a kid, he was obsessed with Madonna and Michael Jackson. At his third-grade talent show, he sang Jackson's "Remember the Time," performing the choreography from the song's music video that Newberry taught himself.

His first major break was as a choreographer for Eminem. He would go on to work with a string of the world's top artists including Nicki Minaj, The Pussycat Dolls, Missy Elliot, and Lil' Wayne. His choreography has also been seen on TV's Dancing with The Stars and The X-Factor.

This month, Bobby Newberry can be seen busting a move in the music video for his own summer jam, "Ride." The song is a feel-good track he co-wrote about taking chances and chasing after life's wildest dreams. We spoke with the young choreographer-turned-singer from his home in Los Angeles.

Shane Gallagher: Are you like the Jennifer Lopez/Paula Abdul of the 2020s?
Bobby Newberry: That is literally the biggest compliment ever. I love them both so much. It's crazy because when people tell me I shouldn't pursue singing because I'm successful as a choreographer, I always say: look at JLo, she does everything!

SG: Music was different back then.
BN: A lot different! Back then, the labels controlled everything. More and more artists are going independent today because they have the freedom to do whatever they want creatively and artistically. The only downside is not having the support behind you. Being an independent artist is tough. There is so much to deal with and handle.

SG: What is the biggest obstacle you face today?
BN: There isn't much of a shelf life for a project. I'll work so hard on a music video, all the writing sessions, rehearsals, shooting, and editing that goes into it, and then it comes out and everyone asks right away, what's next? It's always about what is next.

SG: Tell us about your first intimate acting scene in a music video. What was it like to make out with dreamy Joey Gentile?
BN: Stressful! *(Laughs)* I had to take two shots of tequila before the scene. I wanted it to look authentic and real but the whole time, I was questioning myself, "Do I look ok? Does this look hot or weird?"

SG: Was Joey a good kisser?
BN: A great kisser! Soft but good.

SG: Do you feel ready to do more intimate scenes in future videos?

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Photo By Micky Kurz

BN: When it calls for it in a video, sure. I'll do it again.

SG: "Ride" is your first video with an all-male cast of dancers. That had to be fun.
BN: So fun! Most of the cast and I are super close so it was incredible to dance, make jokes, laugh and do what we love with people that we love.

SG: Does "Ride" represent a new direction in music for you?
BN: I think it represents happiness for me and excitement to be able to do music again. I have so much new music and I honestly cannot wait to release my album.

SG: You are joining a group of artists like Lil Nas and Troye Sivan who are ushering in the loud and proud movement. Why is it important for music artists to be boldly gay today?
BN: So many of us were told we couldn't be too gay because it would be off putting to audiences. It's means everything that I can be my authentic self. I'm a proud LGBTQ artist and I hope to inspire other artists to live their truths.

SG: What was your coming out experience?
BN: My coming out experience was not the best. Growing up, my family was never supportive. My uncles would call me faggot. I finally came out to my mom because I was tired of constantly lying to her and hiding my life. She was convinced it was something she did wrong. I said, "no mom, this is me." She ended up being ok with it. It was such a relief after it was done.

SG: Do you go back home often?
BN: I don't really have a "back home". I grew up all over Orange County, bouncing around as my mom got into quite a bit of trouble with the law. She passed away eleven years ago after having brain surgery to remove a tumor. It was extremely difficult. Except for my little brother, I'm not close with any of my family so we never speak.

SG: What's something fans would never guess about you?
BN: That I worked at El Pollo Loco when I was 14. I grew up extremely poor. Like food stamps and welfare poor. I started working when I was 14 to pay for dance lessons. I worked really hard and eventually earned scholarships.

SG: Who is the most important in your life right now?
BN: Tj paradise. He is the best person on the planet. He's everything.

SG: What do you love to indulge in when no one is looking?
BN: Taco Bell. Such a guilty pleasure. I love it.

SG: Craziest thing left to do on your bucket list?
BN: I want to perform in front of 100,000 people; play a huge festival show.

Photo By Micky Kurz

SG: Billie, Cardi, Dua, Ariana: who would you most like to hang out with and why?
BN: Ariana because she's funny AF and I feel like we would have the same humor. Like I could see us having so much fun.

SG: Where do you see yourself in five years?
BN: I've released five albums, done multiple tours, played big festivals, and have two kids, a boy and a girl. I live in New York, Los Angeles, Miami and travel constantly.

SG: Any plans to stop by Chicago?
Bobby Newberry: God, I miss Chicago! I used to go to Chicago two or three times a year and would always end up at Sidetrack! One wild night, my friend and I were invited to an after party that turned out not to be an after party! It was someone's house that wasn't there. The guy showed up and was like WTF are you guys doing here! Basically, we were breaking and entering. I made a bee-line for the door and ran the heck out.

Follow Bobby Newberry on Instagram @ bobbynewberry.

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Top 40 Dance Chart this week

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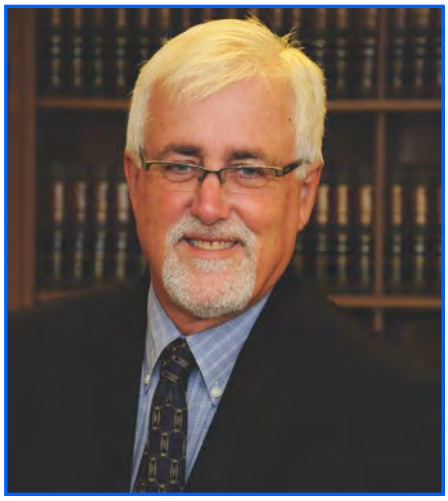
	Artist	Title
1	Kungs	Never Going Home
2	Galantis x David Guetta x Little Mix	Heartbreak Anthem
3	Martin Garrix ft. Bono & The Edge	We Are The People
4	Dyro & Conro	Memory Bank
5	Raye	Call On Me
6	Anabel Englund x Yotto	Waiting For You
7	MK	Lies ft. Raphaella
8	Alok & Sofi Tukker & Inna	It Don't Matter
9	Henri PFR x CMC$ ft. Laura White	Faith (Radio Edit)
10	Timmy Trumpet & Afrojack	Stay Mine (Radio Edit)
11	LNY TNZ	So Easy (VIP Mix)
12	Joe Stone	Right Here
13	Cheat Codes x Tinashe	Lean On Me (Michael Calfan Remix)
14	Afrojack & David Guetta	Hero
15	Allegra	Used To Miss You (R3HAB Remix)
16	Sigrid	Mirror (Paul Woolford Remix)
17	London Grammar	Lose Your Head (Dave Glass Animals Remix)
18	David Solomon	Learn To Love Me ft. Ryan Tedder
19	Zookeper	Think Of You ft. Marlhy (Morgan Page Remix)
20	Love Harder x HUGEL x Tobtok	My Bed ft. RBVLN
21	Niiko x SWAE & Zack Martino ft. Kyle Reynold	Glue
22	Rompasso & Leony	Love Me
23	Wrabel	Nothing But Love (GOLDHOUSE Remix)
24	Regard x Troye Sivan x Tate McRae	You (Radio Edit)
25	Becky Hill & David Guetta	Remember
26	Sofia Carson	Fool's Gold (Tiesto 24 Karat Gold Edition)
27	Becky Hill	Last Time
28	Jonas Blue & Leon	Hear Me Say
29	Lucas Estrada x Matvey Emerson x James Carter x	Never Leave You
30	Dom Dolla	Pump The Brakes (Short Radio Edit)
31	Zara Larsson	Right Here (ALOK Remix)
32	Mike Williams & Felix Jaehn	Without You (Radio Mix)
33	Joel Corry x Raye x David Guetta	Bed
34	Cuebrick	Love You (Original Mix)
35	JANNEY	Leave You Now (Boye & Sigvardt Remix)
36	ILLENIUM x Valerie Broussard & Nurko	Sideways (Quintino Remix)
37	Drove & Justin Caruso	Intoxicated
38	Jes	Tight Wires
39	DubVision x AMNL KNGDM	I Wanna Be There (Radio Edit)
40	Audien	Learn To Love Again

MEETING HOUSE
TAVERN

Photos By Ken Brown

GRAB ROGER

How Does a Divorce Affect Your Estate Plan?



Q: My husband and I enjoyed several years of marriage and decided last year to get divorced. When we married, we signed powers of attorney, a will and a trust to avoid probate and protect each other. I am the beneficiary of his will and trust and the named beneficiary of his IRA and life insurance policies. After our divorce, we never changed our paperwork.

He was just hospitalized after a very bad car crash and I want to use the Power of Attorney to handle his finances. Can I? Does the divorce change anything with our wills or trusts with me being the beneficiary should he pass away? And what happens to me as beneficiary of his IRA, life insurance policies and bank accounts with me listed as a TOD (transfer on death, payable-on-death account or Totten trust) beneficiary?

A: Lawyers and clients often fail to consider the impact of a client neglecting to name a new agent in his/her powers of attorney to replace an ex-spouse after divorce. Under §2-6(b) of the Illinois Power of Attorney Act, 755 ILCS 45/1-1, et seq., a former spouse named as an agent under a power of attorney is deemed to have died on the date of the judgment for dissolution of marriage or legal separation.

Unless your former husband signed a new power of attorney after your divorce naming you as his agent, you cannot use the POA signed before the divorce. If there is a successor agent named, that successor agent can use the POA, but you cannot.

Likewise, an order of dissolution of marriage revokes gifts to former spouses in wills and revocable trust instruments executed prior to the entry of the order. This means that you cannot receive any bequests under his will and revocable trust. Those documents would be construed as you having died on the on the date of the judgment for dissolution of marriage.

If, however, your ex-husband had used other probate avoiding strategies such as a land trust to own real estate or payable-on-death accounts or Totten trusts, your dissolution of marriage does not invalidate you as beneficiary. Likewise, divorce does not automatically revoke designations of ex-spouses as beneficiaries of life insurance, employee benefits, or individual retirement accounts.

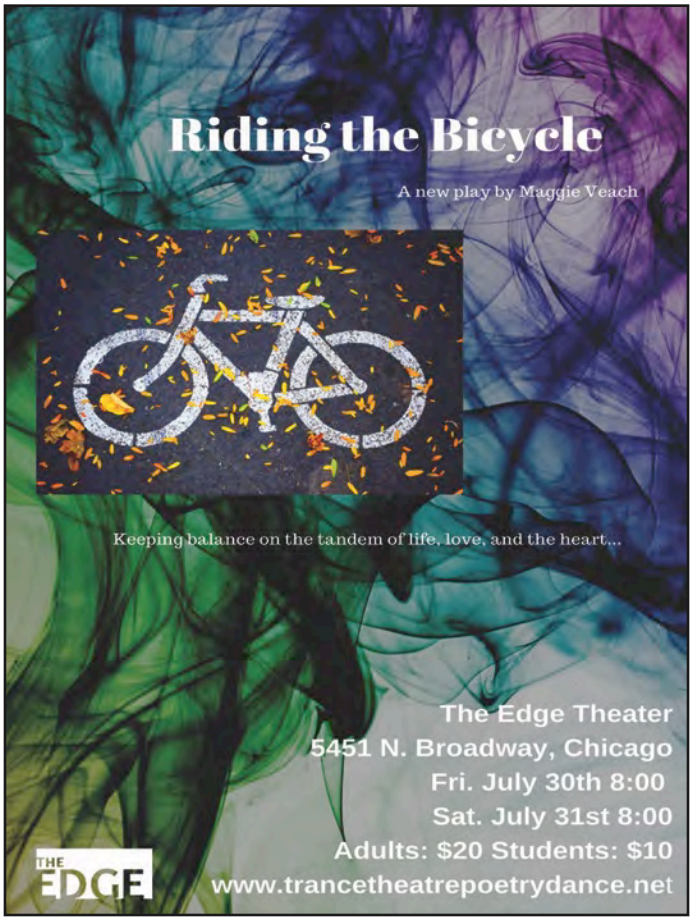
If your ex-husband had used a land trust for the real estate, totten trusts, named beneficiaries of IRA and retirement accounts and life insurance policies, the divorce does not automatically invalidate those transfers to you as beneficiary and you will be able to receive that property in the event of your ex-husband's death.

IRA and Life Insurance Policies. Generally, if you name someone as beneficiary of your life insurance, IRAs and employee benefits – such as 401(k) and pension and profit-sharing plans – that asset won't be subject to probate, will not pass through a will, but will go to a named beneficiary even a divorced spouse.

Totten Trusts. A Totten trust is simply the name for a kind of bank account where one person deposits money in his or her name as trustee for another. The depositor reserves the power to withdraw all or part of the money at any time. Upon the death of the depositor, the money in the bank account is paid to the named beneficiary of the trust, which could be the divorced spouse.

Land Trusts. Beneficiary designations of a land trust that holds legal title to a house are also not automatically invalidated by a divorce. If your ex-spouse owned real estate in a land trust naming you as beneficiary, and he should pass away, all that is required of you as beneficiary of the land trust is to deliver a certified copy of the death certificate to the land trustee (bank) and they will change their records reflecting the new ownership of the trust in your name.

Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a gradute of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a member of the Chicago Bar Association. You can email him at ***RVMLawyer@aol.com****. He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues raised in this column.*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Photos By Ken Brown

GRAB HOLLY

Now Let Us Punish the Wicked!

By Holly Maholm

We have all heard the saying, "When life gives you lemons – make lemonade." And good advice that is, increasing (at least metaphorically) the supply of cold, sweet beverage on a hot day. But we also know, do we not, that there are others in this world (including someone named Cruella) who would prefer to follow that lesser known saying, "When life gives you puppies – make a coat." Aly, I am pleased to say, loved puppies as much as she loved lemonade.

Work was well under way at No. 9, Wellington Square. This was our decrepit, ramshackle Victorian Gingerbread, which, were it located in one of the tonier neighborhoods of San Francisco, and painted a half-dozen primary colors, could claim the title "Painted Lady." To just this appellation No. 9 aspired, and to that end Aly – who had taken over the role of "resident artist" - was in charge of choosing the colors for its exterior paint and fixtures.

Aly's "Artistic Muse" was – apparently – a seven-year-old child, inasmuch as Aly chose colors for No. 9 that borrowed heavily from a First Grader's box of crayons. There was ample Red (Candy Apple), Green (Forest), Yellow (Sunshine), Blue (Monday), Purple (Royal and Majestic) and Teal (the duck). All these colors were glossy, bright and here-and-there bejeweled with a smattering of glass and crystal faux-gemstones harvested from the costume jewelry we collected to decorate the Wedding Carriage. Though we are warned against "gilding the lily," Aly decided that a little "bedazzlement" wouldn't hurt.

You recall that all three Outlaws – Recon, Fender and Tuco – agreed to help with the renovation of No. 9. Of the three, Recon applied himself with boundless energy to the task of "general contractor." He brought up to date every operating system of the house, including pipes and plumbing, electrical boxes and wiring, and the HVAC system – with its rats' nest of tubes, ducts and junctures. He brought in a structural engineer to inspect the foundation, and afterward spent several days and nights – never leaving the site – while steel beams were brought in to sit upon newly poured concrete footers. He was quickly learning what an experienced GC needs to know.

Next, I have told you that Fender is a musician. Accordingly, we know that – for him – the concept of a "pre-determined schedule" is as vaporous and indefinite as a choral refrain. For Fender, "working to a deadline" was not a melody he could carry, nor a key in which he could sing. So, instead of working on the house, he substituted in the delivery chariots for Recon and Tuco, thereby allowing them to work more hours on-site. No one complained. All could see that Fender's honest, natural contribution to the feng shui of No. 9 would be entirely melodic and in no way dependent upon sandpaper, brushes or shellac.

The third Outlaw – Tuco – and our Residential Muse – Aly – were focused on renovating the first floor of No. 9 into an Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Parlor, which they intended to operate as a business. They asked me to meet them around back of the building, where the old crematorium is located, and the three of us were soon standing inside the front door of that morbid structure. Tuco spoke.

"When No. 9 was constructed, its kitchen was located in a separate structure built behind the house, and separated from the back door by a gap of a dozen feet. Fire was a problem in those days. Villages like ours did not have a proper Fire Department, and had to rely on volunteer fire fighters and hand-powered pumpers. Consequently, people built the kitchen – which was prone to catch fire – separate from the house.

"Now… when old man Hauserman built his crematorium, he placed it in the same location as the old kitchen. He gave it a wide and deep foundation, which is still intact. The old furnace he used to cremate bodies is over there," (he pointed) "but it will be easy to demo and haul out. And over there," (he pointed) "is the 'cooler' where he kept the bodies on ice until the funeral. That's in good shape, too.

"Aly and I are confident this building will provide all the space we need to store the milk, cream and other ingredients we will use to make the many flavors of ice cream we intend to sell. We did our research, and we concluded we need to offer our own unique, 'artisanal flavors.' We can't make money selling flavors of ice cream you can get at any ordinary grocery store."

Aly jumped in. "But Holly, the greatest challenge we face in making our business a success is 'marketing.' That's why we wanted to ask if you'd be okay if… when we set up our kitchen, we make room for a Unicorn?"

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Volume 2 of What Would a Unicorn Do? (now available on Amazon) which contains additional episodes of Holly's on-going story of her life among the unicorns, plus additional articles and a short story of a transgender woman confronted by Satan! Send a message to Holly ***www.hollymaholm.com.***

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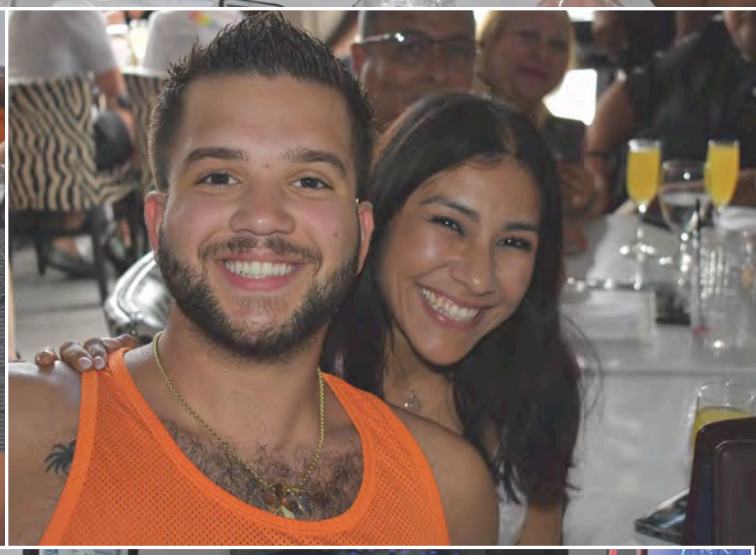
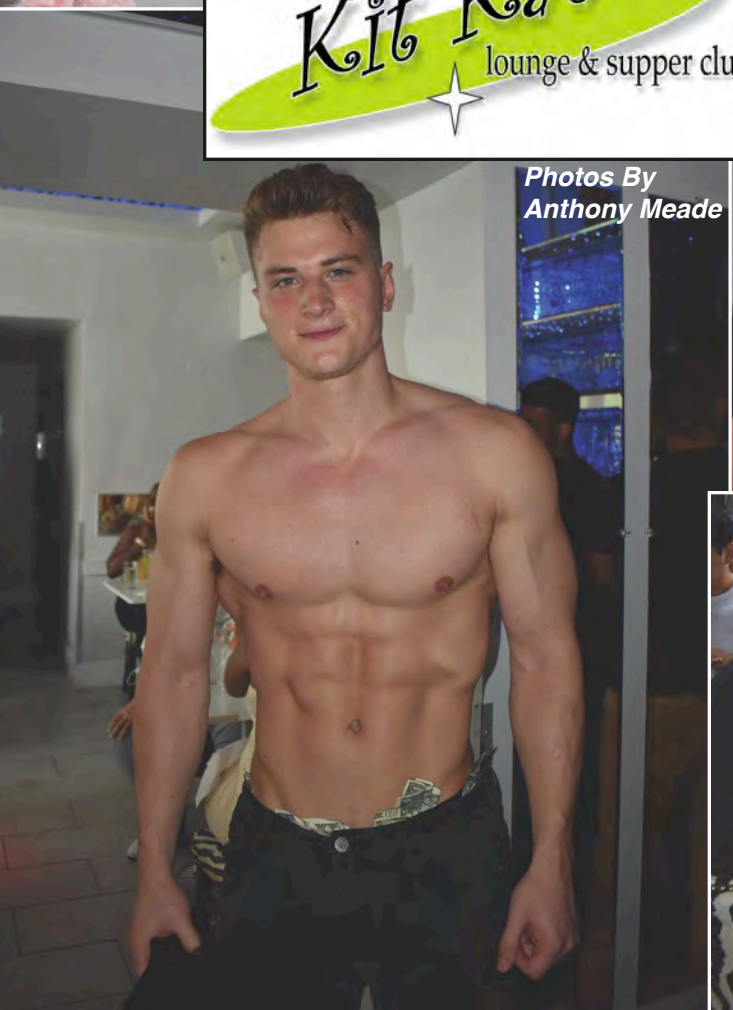


Kit Kat lounge & supper club

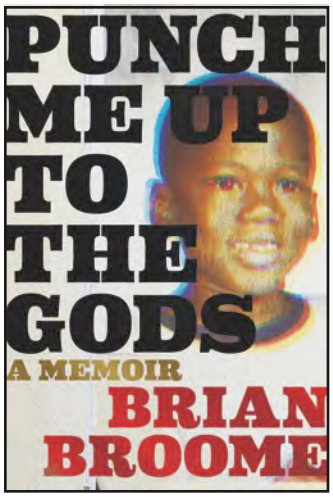
Photos By Anthony Meade



GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"*Punch Me Up to the Gods: A Memoir*" by *Brian Broome*
c.2021, HMH Books $26.00 / $38.00 Canada 272 pages



Little kids have it so easy.

Somebody feeds them when they're hungry, does their laundry, buys them toys, and plays with them. Somebody escorts them everywhere and sometimes, they even get carried. Yep, life is good when you're a little kid except, as in the new memoir, "Punch Me Up to the Gods" by Brian Broome, when it's not.

He called Corey his "best friend," but Corey was no friend to ten-year-old Brian Broome. Sure, things were sympatico at first but it didn't take long for Corey to sense Broome's insecurities, or to start pummelling Broome, or to humiliate him. Broome's father hoped that Corey might act as "a form of therapy" for a boy who played with girls too much; Broome endured the abuse and didn't complain to the adults because he was a little in love with Corey.

As if Corey's thrashings weren't harsh enough, Broome's dad beat Broome for a multitude of reasons, from a pink shirt to frustration over unemployment to racism: he said he'd rather kill his children himself than to let a white person do it. Broome. in fact, often wished that he was white like the people on TV, so he'd have the benefits of it. White parents really seemed to love their kids...

Broome dreamed of moving far away from the tiny working-class Ohio town of his birth, to a larger city where he believed he could avoid the bullying and teasing, leave his life behind, and escape the embarrassment of his parents' ramshackle existence. He did leave once, for college, but he was deeply humiliated by the racism and homophobia of his roommates. He called his mother then, and she came to get him.

She was one of a handful of Black women who saved him.

Being a man isn't easy. Being a Black man in America is harder. Being a gay Black man led Broome to drugs, alcohol, and away from his family – although, he says, "... yes, I was loved. Just not in ways that I could understand."

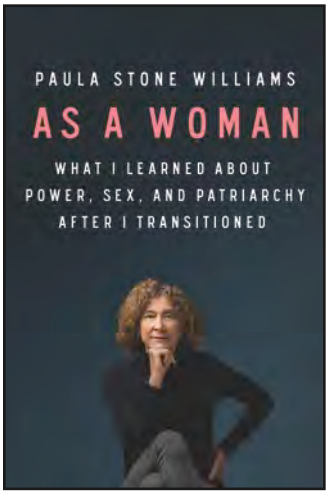
Be prepared to be messed with here. Your emotions may never be the same.

There's a tighly-coiled, ready-to-strike fist wrapped in melancholy and a miles-long people-watching incident in this book, both giving aptness to its title. "Punch Me Up to the Gods" refers to author Brian Broome's father's second-favorite words before the beatings began, and they'll hit you hard, too. You're not embarrassed, in fact, to be seen carrying a book around, are you? Because you will, this one.

Happily, there are moments of humor, too, as Broome recalls things that occurred in his youth, or maybe just a few years ago. He surprises readers with similes that are sobering, in the middle of laughter. He steps back sometimes, to pick at something else, turns it over twice to examine it, and pulls it into his tale.

For this, you won't regret picking this wonderfully companionable, startingly gracious and compelling memoir. "Punch Me Up to the Gods" is a don't-miss, devouring it is so easy.

"As a Woman: What I Learned about Power, Sex, and the Patriarchy After I Transitioned" by *Paula Stone*
c.2021. Atria Books $27.00 / $36.00 Canada 256 pages



There are two sides to every story.

In politics, there's left and right; in fairy tales, it's good or evil. Guilty or innocent in court, salty or spicy mealtimes, dog or cat among friends, heads or tails. Sometimes you choose and at other times, like in "As a Woman" by Paula Stone Williams, you can see both sides.

From the time he was very small, Paul Williams thought that he "should have been born a girl." He wasn't bitter about it – not when he was a teen, not even as an adult – but it lingered in the background of his life.

Oh, he tried to tamp down his desires to dress in his mother's clothes but he could not, though he knew it would anger her. She caught him once wearing his Grandmother's cast-offs and he never forgot her reaction; even so, he ransacked her closet at least once a week during his adolescence, hoping his parents wouldn't come home early.

His feelings of furtiveness were perhaps exacerbated by a family legacy of evangelical ministry. Every man he knew was a leader in their church; when he was young, it was assumed that Williams would follow them, as if there was no other option. And so, dutifully, he became a CEO in a "church planting" organization. He married a woman he genuinely loved, and they started a family.

But the urges didn't go away. As his children grew and left the nest, Williams began to explore the possibility of letting out the woman he was inside. He confessed everything to his wife, started hormones, and asked for his wife's silence until he made plans for a transition physically and at work. He'd been at the organization for thirty-five years, and he was respected, although less than he believed. Williams was fired and humiliated.

Marriage in question, children shaken, job gone, he began to assess his life.

The world needed to know the truth.

And so, on July 29, 2014, Paula Stone Williams officially took to her blog...

Come to "As a Woman" looking for a memoir, and you're going to be happy: most of the pages here tell a tale of transitioning while immersed in a major evangelical organization, which are generally incompatible things. This is interesting, told in an unabashedly forward manner as author Paula Stone Williams resists minimizing her male past.

Dig deeper, though, and there's more to this book: its look at the difference in how society as a whole regards the roles of men and women, from someone with knowledge of both, is funny and sharp-eyed, and could serve as a primer-slash-warning for newly-transitioning women. It's fiery, it's sometimes the tiniest bit whiny, it's a little repetitious, and it's eyebrow-raising with a dash of heated argument-starter for zest.

In the end, "As a Woman" leaves a lot for female readers to agree with; Williams' observations are honed, hard, and honest. Men. however – particularly cis men – could take umbrage at her observations, and might give this book a little bit of side-eye.

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Market Days August 6, 7 & 8

The Northalsted Business Alliance plans to host Market Days August 6-8, adding a Friday night edition, the first in its 38-year history. As vaccinations increase and Illinois begins planning for stage 5 reopening, organizers of the iconic event are in full preparation mode. Chairperson ***Mark Liberson*** commented, "The committee is hard at work selecting performers, signing contracts, and making plans for an exciting weekend in Chicago this summer."

Since the first Market Day in August 1982, the LGBTQ+ positive event has grown from a handful of folding tables and chairs on the sidewalk, to a half-mile long, annual summer ritual on Chicago's North Halsted Street from Belmont to Addison, featuring all-day lineups of live music and international DJs on 5 stages, 300 vendors, arts, crafts, wares, summer food & drinks, dancing in the street, and more. A $15 recommended donation for entry supports the festival entertainment cost, local charities, neighborhood programming, and maintenance in the community.

Northalsted Business Alliance President ***Ramesh Ariyanayakam*** shares his optimism for hosting this years' event. "We look forward to the possibility of welcoming neighbors and visitors alike to this iconic event. While planning is underway, we will remain in continual contact with the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois and monitor the CDC guidelines to be flexible in our approach to meet all necessary requirements to produce a safe event."

Where: Halsted St. from Belmont to Addison

When: (anticipated) August 6, 7, and 8, 2021
Why: Celebration of community and culture in Chicago's Proudest Neighborhood
Who: Northalsted Business Alliance & Chicago SSA#18
Admission: suggested $15 donation, all ages
Website: marketdayschicago.com
Contact: Info@northalsted.com (773) 883-0500.

CHICAGO DANCERS UNITED ANNOUNCES DANCE FOR LIFE 30TH ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM AUGUST 26 AT MILLENNIUM PARK

Chicago Dancers United (CDU), which supports the health and wellness of Chicago's professional dance community, announces an expanded lineup and program for the 30th anniversary of its annual fundraiser, ***Dance for Life***, which takes place in person on Thursday, August 26 at 6 p.m. (new start time) at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park. For the first time in the event's history, admission is free.

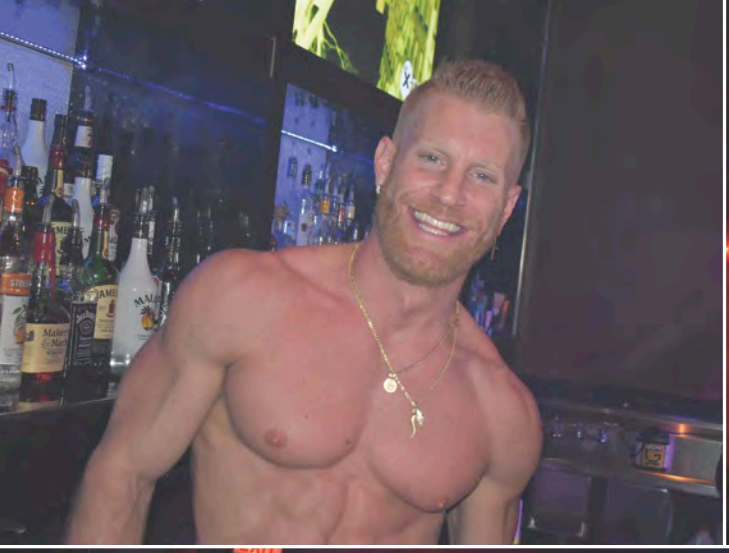
The complete lineup of companies includes ***DanceWorks Chicago, Giordano Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Joffrey Ballet, Movement Revolution Dance Crew, PARA.MAR Dance Theatre, South Chicago Dance Theatre, Trinity Irish Dance Company***, and ***Visceral Dance Chicago.***

Randy Duncan will choreograph a world premiere finale. The program also includes a film by ***Winifred Haun & Dancers.***

Dance for Life raises money for The Dancers' Fund, which provides Chicago dance industry professionals with financial support for preventative health care and critical medical needs. The event showcases the city's unique variety of dance traditions and styles by bringing together professional dance companies and dancers from throughout Chicago, who unite to support their peers by generously donating their time, energy, and artistry. Throughout its history, Dance for Life has presented nearly 40 Chicago-based professional dance companies representing a variety of genres, sizes, and histories and numerous choreographers, artists, and designers.

Co-chairs for the Dance for Life 30th Anniversary Celebration are ***Jennifer Edgcomb, Mark Ferguson Gomez***, and ***Tom Ferguson Gomez.*** Optum is the Presenting Sponsor of Dance for Life. Additional beneficiaries of Dance for Life are *AIDS Foundation Chicago* and *American Cancer Society.*

For additional information or to make a contribution, visit ***chicagodancersunited.org/events.***

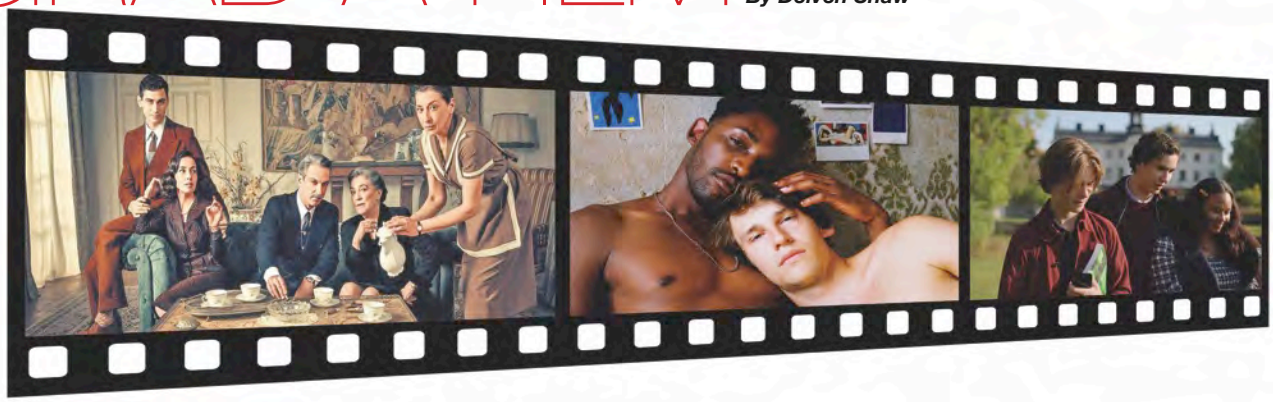


hydrate

Photos By
Anthony Meade

GRAB A FILM

By Delven Shaw



SOMEONE HAS TO DIE: Hate the title, love the show.

Your heart is immediately drawn to a young man who had been sent away from his home and country at age 10 and is now back in Franco's Spain in the mid-20th century. His arrival in a family dominated by a overbearing father and scheming grandmother is made all the more complex by his companion – the excellent and beautiful 'ballerino'.

The themes of son vs. father, husband vs. wife, and freedom vs patriotism may be familiar. But the territory is given a lush production, with a serviceable script, and an excellent cast.

You might find yourself thinking of *The Dance of the 41* which explores similar historical themes. But the action is swift, the dancer is incredibly beautiful and talented, and the aching and loving evoked by the time you get to the third and final installation are wonderfully realized.

I was most touched by the performance of the young man who experimented early in life, but then suppressed his true emotions. The scene in the car with the two former friends is explosive.

The musical score and soundtrack are sensational. Despite the title, I had a great time, and was reminded of a time in Spain's not so distant past when being different was regarded as the greatest of crimes.

https://youtu.be/25hk3z4COnU

BOY MEETS BOY is a fest favorite.

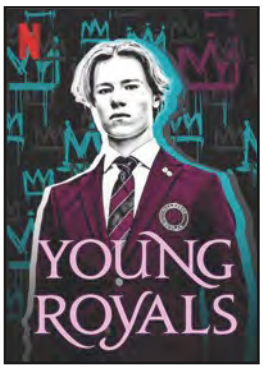
Boy Meets Boy is a concise fest favorite which is remarkably satisfying. It seems to be shot with one camera, with extreme closeup of its two stars. The screenplay by director Daniel Sanchez Lopez seems improvised at times, giving the film a freshness and honesty that other films about adrift youth fail to capture.

Harry (***Matthew James Morrison***) is on the last night of his holiday when he meets Johannes (***Alexandros Koutsoulis***) with whom he has an immediate connection and kinship. As the two wile away the hours till Harry must head for the airport, they learn what each could gain from this relationship, and what each is missing from their current situation.

The potential of what is never to be achieved hangs over the film like a chilly fog on a hot day. As the boys' dance, drink and dream, the impending flight takes on more and more importance. It stands, like the similarly themed Summer of 85, a notation of a moment of joy which will never be captured again.

The style and beautiful look of the film are very much a part of its charm. Hopefully, all these artists will be seen again in future work.

YOUNG ROYALS is slightly bent look at royalty.



Young Royals, the smashing Netflix show from Sweden, has something for those who love films about royal families, with a special lavender touch. ***Edvin Ryding*** is absolutely gripping as a young, troubled royal who is sent to the Hillerska boarding school so he can take a step toward manhood that his older brother, the Crown Prince, triumphed in. However, Wilhem has been living in the long golden shadow of his brother, so everything is a challenge – sports, friendships, academics, and living on his own. The friends, enemies, and relationships he experiences at school will no doubt shape his life and career, and I cannot wait for subsequent seasons.

When Wilhem meets Simon (***Omar Rudberg***) a townie who is not of his same social class, he meets a friend with neither pretension nor promise, but who is comfortable in his own skin. The friendship between two boys of different classes is as old as time in fiction, but this take seems fresh and honest, partly because Omar Rudberg is a wonderfully authentic on-screen presence. Unlike many movies, the students at the school are not movie star handsome. They are pimply and out of shape and overweight, which is wonderful and charming.

I heartily recommend Young Royals, as the episodes fly by with a crucial plot point happening in each. Congrats to the cast and entire creative team.

There are a lot of queer culture available screening right now. Check out the two-minute reviews at DelvenShaw.com for more!

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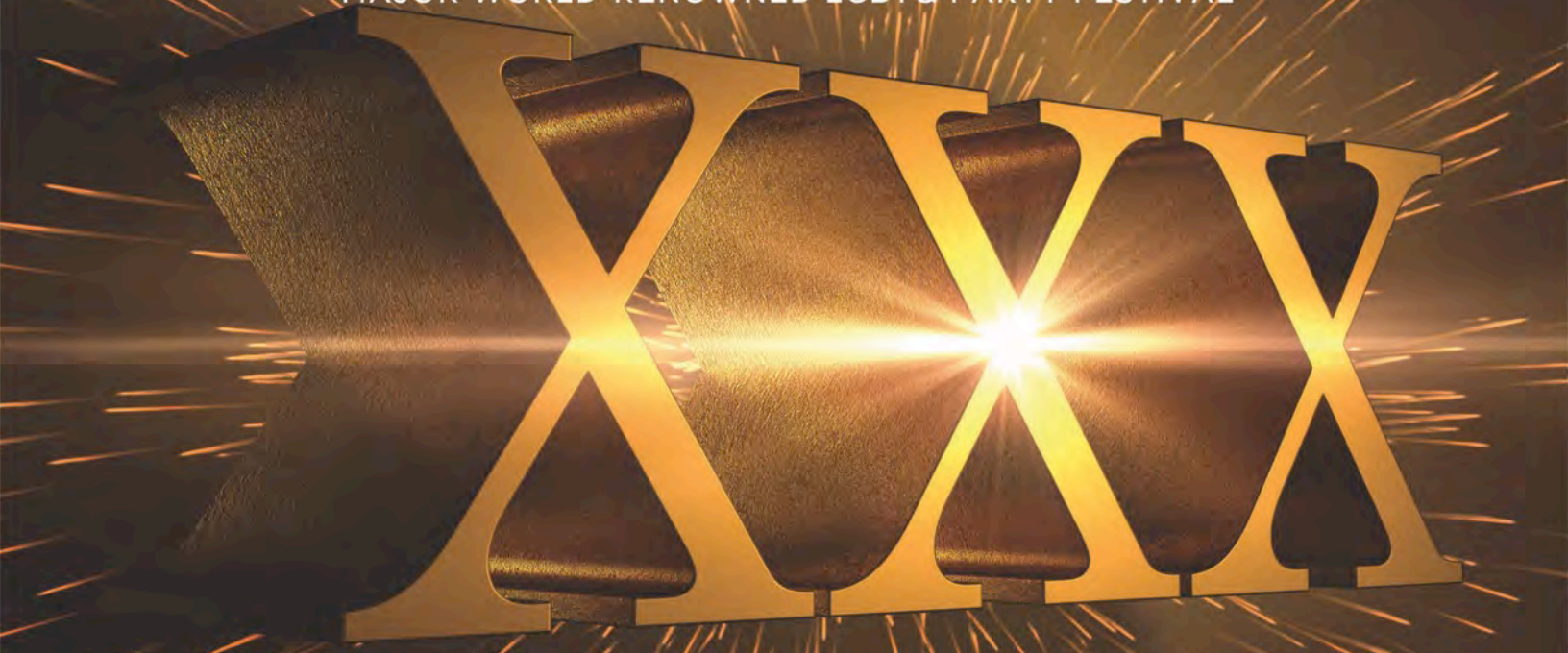

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LITTLE HAG RELEASES RE-BRANDED SINGLE *"GET REAL!"*

New Jersey's self-proclaimed bitch rockers, ***Little Hag***, have officially released *"Get Real!"* via Bar/None Records. The vintage single was released a few years back under the solo project of ***Avery Mandeville*** (frontwoman), but has been remixed, remastered and is officially out now.

Additionally, Little Hag has announced the release of their forthcoming sophomore album *Leash* due out September 24, 2021 via Bar/None Records. Leash came together in between night classes, bartending shifts, first kisses, last kisses, shitty gigs, karaoke nights and all the emptiness of the quarantine that came after.

On the record, Mandeville shares, "It's a sarcastic but seriously cynical pop rock soundtrack for the dropouts and the disappointments; for that moment when your head hits the pillow and you relive your every shortcoming and mistake." Leash elaborates on these themes; calling out abusive men, stalking social media, and reckless driving. Something is holding a defeated and nostalgic Mandeville hostage, tethered to her misanthropic perspective. But she's not wrong in her grievances; men are disgusting, women are beautiful, fear is paralyzing and death is imminent. Time to face it.

Furthermore, the band has some very exciting plans leading up to the release of the album, which includes an three-track EP that they're calling Breakfast, which will include tracks *"Blood," "Cum,"* and *"Piss"* and will be released August 11, 2021.

Frontwoman and songwriter Avery Mandeville has been doing this since '94. When she was 16, *Bruce Springsteen* threw a $20 bill in her guitar case while she played on a park bench in the dead of winter. As a solo artist, Mandeville released a number of EPs and put thousands of miles on other people's vans touring the U.S.

Little Hag was later conceived in her suburban New Jersey basement and born again in Asbury Park during the pandemic. They've kept busy recording new music, performing remotely on Brooklyn Vegan with Teenage Halloween, doing drive-in parking lot concerts and a stint recording unique one-of-a-kind acetates for fans who quickly gobbled them up. Little Hag is Mandeville (she/her) on guitar and complaining, ***Matt Fernicola*** (he/him) on lead guitar, ***Owen Flanagan*** (he/him) on drums, ***Chris Dubrow*** (he/him) on bass, and ***Noah Rauchwerk*** (he/him) on keys and emotional support.

Signed by Hoboken's Bar/None Records just before the shut down, Little Hag emerged in 2020 with "Tetris," a 2 minute slice of pure pop pugnaciousness. A compilation LP titled Whatever Happened To Avery Jane? followed, chronicling Avery's many pleasures and pains, and made a splash on college radio and commercial specialty shows. Passion of the Weiss called Little Hag "…a thrilling songwriter, untethered from time and place, sending DMs and shade, not greetings, from Asbury Park."

For more information visit ***https://www.littlehag.com/.***

CROSSING I'S DOTTING T'S ANNOUNCE DEBUT SELF-TITLED EP OUT AUGUST 6

California based alternative rock band ***Crossing I's Dotting T's*** have announced their debut self-titled EP out August 6, 2021 via Golden Robot / Riot Records. Produced/mixed by ***Alex Estrada*** (Joyce Manor / Touche Amore) and mastered by ***Jack Shirley*** (Deafheaven, Jeff Rosenstock), the EP is honest, hard-hitting, and raw - a release that will surely allow the band to carve out their space in the alternative scene.

On their debut EP, vocalist / frontman ***Matt Mucinero*** shares, "This EP is inspired by the death of my cousin/best friend who left us at the age of 21 due to cancer. 'See You At Your Funeral' is specifically about him, and the remaining songs talk of depression, anxiety, questioning society, the inevitability of death, as well as just simply not feeling wanted in certain moments. It is a mixed bag with no one main influence, but we took inspiration from a lot of 90's alt rock bands like Nirvana, The Pixies, Foo Fighters, Jawbreaker, as well as newer bands such as Joyce Manor, to create a blueprint for what Crossing I's Dotting T's will sound like. It is Grunge meets Emo meets Alt-Rock meets Pop-Punk. A quick 4-song EP, there is something for everyone on this."

Alongside the announcement, Crossing I's Dotting T's have shared the first single from the upcoming EP with *"Dissatisfied." "'Dissatisfied'* is a track about being overwhelmed with life and relationships of all sorts, as well as the inevitably of death while feeling you are always under pressure to live up to something" the band shares.

Check out the single now at ***smarturl.it/CIDT-Dissatisfied***

LAKES RELEASE NEW SINGLE *"RETROGRADE"*

Six-piece indie-rock ensemble, ***Lakes***, have shared *"Retrograde"* – the third and final single from their upcoming album, *Start Again*, due out on July 30 via Know Hope Records (US), Big Scary Monsters (UK) and Friend Of Mine Records (Japan).

Founded by drummer and writer, ***Matt Shaw***, Lakes have evolved immensely over the past four years. Maturing from a mini, bedroom side-project to a fully fleshed out math rock group, they continue to grow in groundbreaking new ways.

With the release of *The Tahoe* EP in 2018, The Geneva EP in 2019 and *The Constance* LP in 2019, Lakes were praised by the likes of Rocksound, BrooklynVegan, AltPress and Washed Up Emo, who referred to the group as "Your new favourite band." The band's spell-binding and triumphant live show saw them out on the road with UK label-mates Orchards and Nervus, and unexpectedly spread their reputation halfway across the globe, with Tower Records Tokyo profiling the band in-store, and Friend Of Mine Records in Japan and Know Hope Records in the US welcoming the group to their rosters.

Now, Lakes are ready to release *Start Again*, which features profound melodies, improved basslines and poppy choruses. Recorded over the course of nine months and various lockdowns—and produced and mixed by ***Neil Strauch*** (Owen, Owls, Joan Of Arc, Slow Mass)—*Start Again* is a testament of the human condition, as it explores themes such as mental health, addiction, break-ups and cutting out toxic friends.

For more information on Lakes, visit:
https://ourbandlakes.com/

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Chicago Magic Lounge to Reopen it's secret doors to the public August 2nd!

The Magic is Back®! Chicago Magic Lounge, Chicago's home for close-up magic, has announced plans to reopen its speakeasy-style Art Deco venue on August 2, 2021. Chicago Magic Lounge will be open at capacity, including the Blackstone Cabaret, 654 Club and Performance Bar. To celebrate the Grand Reopening after a 16-month intermission, Chicago Magic Lounge will be hosting a full week of Signature Shows, from August 2-8, 2021.

Opening week, August 2-8, 2021, will spotlight some of Chicago's best local talent, including Signature Show emcee ***Jan Rose***, headliner ***Luis Carreon*** and featured performer ***Justin Purcell***. Following the main stage performance, ***Paige Thompson*** will perform a close-up magic set for Premium ticketholders in the intimate 654 Club. The Performance Bar will feature AJ Sacco, Deven Brown, and The Amazing Bibik.

CML Owner ***Joey Cranford*** comments, "Chicago Magic Lounge is like no other place in Chicago, or elsewhere else, for that matter. We are thrilled to be reopening the secret doors to our gorgeous venue offering a unique entertainment experience. We can't wait to welcome our audience, magicians and staff. Like so many, we have been looking forward to Opening Day for so long. In honor of our reopening, we want to celebrate the heart of Chicago-style magic by featuring Chicago Magic Lounge company members and local fan favorites, who rank alongside the best magicians worldwide."

Headliner *Luis Carreon* is an accomplished and well-respected magician, originally from Mexico. He won the Harlan Tarbell Close-up Competition Award from the International Brotherhood of Magicians two years in a row. He also took home first place at the Chicago Magic Competition hosted by The Society of American Magicians.

With his unique style of humor and wisdom, Luis regularly travels the country teaching other magicians about the art of magic. He is, also, the head demonstrator at Magic Inc., the oldest family-owned magic shop in the country. Internationally, Luis has been featured on the Univision evening news showcasing his talents. He was honored to be a semi-finalist on Tengo Talento, the Spanish language equivalent of America's Got Talent. In addition, he is also a frequent performer at the famous Magic Castle in Hollywood, California. Luis can be seen performing regularly at The Chicago Magic Lounge where he is also one of the founding members.

Tickets for all Chicago Magic Lounge performances are available at the box office, ***(312) 366-4500*** or online at ***chicagomagiclounge.com.*** Chicago Magic Lounge is a 21+ venue. Ages 16+ allowed to ticketed shows with a legal guardian.

Victory Fund Endorses 24 More LGBTQ Candidates

Six out LGBTQ candidates won their Democratic primaries for New York City Council seats, all of which are extremely likely to win their November general elections in the heavily Democratic city. If all six are elected, the New York City Council will increase its LGBTQ members from the four who are currently serving.

Among the winners are ***Crystal Hudson*** and ***Kristin Richardson Jordan***, who are likely to become the first Black out LGBTQ women elected to the council. ***Chi Ossé*** is also likely to become the youngest person ever elected to the council. Also victorious were ***Erik Bottcher, Tiffany Cabán*** and ***Lynn Schulman***.

All four current LGBTQ members of the New York City Council are termed out this year, which had created some concern LGBTQ representation on the council would diminish come November. But the primary victories make that scenario unlikely.

"New York City's slate of LGBTQ council candidates are a reflection of the city they aim to represent, and many will make political history when elected in November," said ***Mayor Annise Parker***, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund. "New York City's LGBTQ community and communities of color are uniquely impacted by the effects of the pandemic, making these six LGBTQ leaders critical to ensuring equitable policies that help all New Yorkers recover. It is a transformational moment for New York City and the ideal time for the council's LGBT Caucus to grow."

The six LGBTQ council candidates endorsed by LGBTQ Victory Fund who won primaries are:
Erik Bottcher (District 3): Would preserve LGBTQ representation in the 3rd district, a legacy seat that is home to the Stonewall Inn.
Tiffany Cabán (District 22): Would be the first out LGBTQ person elected to the 22nd District seat.
Crystal Hudson (District 35): Would be the first Black out LGBTQ woman elected to the council (along with Kristin Richardson Jordan, if she wins her election too).
Chi Ossé (District 36): Would be the youngest person ever elected to the council.
Kristin Richardson Jordan (District 9): Would be the first Black out LGBTQ woman elected to the council (along with Crystal Hudson, if she wins her election too).
Lynn Schulman (District 29): Would be the first out queer woman elected to any public office from Queens.

More information about all of Victory Fund's endorsed candidates is available at ***victoryfund.org/ourcandidates***. Since 1991, Victory Fund has helped thousands of openly LGBTQ candidates win local, state and federal elections.

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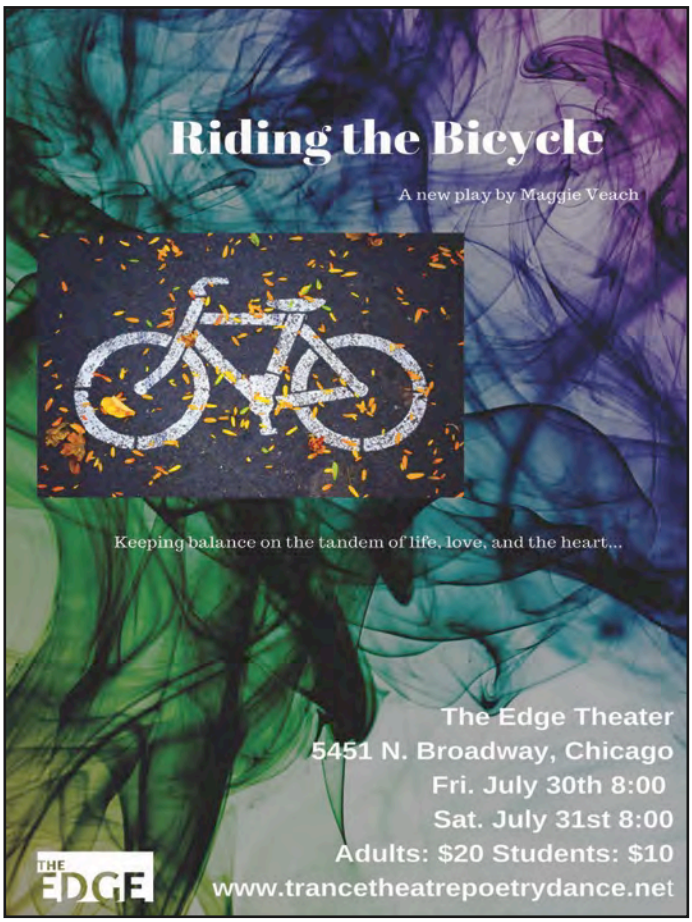
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